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ABSTRACT

This course introduces students enrolled in an adult high school diploma program to a set of learning strategies that they can use in any further education or training, in job and career training, and in personal learning. The course provides the basis for lifelong learning. The course contains nine lessons, each of which consists of stories, examples, information sheets, activities, and assignments. The following lessons are included: (1) "Introduction: Naming the Strategies"; (2) "Keeping a Learning Journal"; (3) "Understanding What Makes Us Want to Learn"; (4) "More on Motivation"; (5) "What Does It Mean to 'Pay Attention?'"; (6) "Learning by Paying Attention as We Read"; (7) "'I Know I Really Learned It!'"; (8) "Knowing and Remembering"; and (9) "Organizing Strategies." (KC)

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ED 436 661

Learning Strategies

Overview

A course in "learning strategies" you may be asking. What do I need this for? I've been learning all my life so why take a course in it? Learning comes naturally, like breathing. Doesn't it? Even babies learn, from the moment of birth. No one tells them how to do it.

Well, yes and no to the above questions! Much of learning is a natural process. Look, for example, at the way we learned to use language. We acquired a good deal of our vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, grammar, intonation, and inflection all on our own by the time we were five years old. Some learning is almost reflexive; as human beings we just can't help it! We've learned many things simply by observing and mimicking others, pretty effortlessly and without much awareness of ourselves in the process.

Much learning, however, requires conscious effort on our part: our time, willingness, persistence, skills, and experience. All we need do is think back to times we've tried to learn about something unfamiliar or how to do something we've never done before and we realize that learning isn't always as easy as falling off a log. It's more like learning how to ride a log down the rapids without falling off. We can push the metaphor and add that learning can be very exciting, especially when we're learning something that we're intensely interested in. And it can be very challenging, especially when we find ourselves struggling to understand new ideas and concepts. Chances are we wouldn't want to ride those whitewater rapids without some instruction on how to steer or what equipment to use. So it is with learning. Instruction on how to improve the skills we bring to the learning process and continuous practice in these skills will help us navigate successfully through all kinds of learning situations.

This course introduces you to a set of strategies that you'll use in any further education or training you choose, in job and career training and in your own personal learning. You've probably heard the phrase "lifelong learning." The lessons listed below can provide you with a roadmap for the learning you choose to do long after you finish this course -- your own lifelong learning experiences.

- **Introduction: Naming the Strategies**
- **Lesson One: Keeping a Learning Journal**
- **Lesson Two: Understanding What Makes Us Want to Learn**
- **Lesson Three: More on Motivation**
- **Lesson Four: What Does It Mean to "Pay Attention?"**
- **Lesson Five: Learning by Paying Attention as We Read**
- **Lesson Six: "I know I really learned it!"**

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- Lesson Seven: Knowing and Remembering
- Lesson Eight: Organizing Strategies

Learning Strategies

About this Course
Information for Teachers

The Learning Strategies course focuses on helping students become more conscious of the learning process. The course provides instruction on how to improve the skills they bring to the learning process and the assignments offer practice in using specific learning strategies.

Target Population

This course is for students who could benefit by becoming more active learners. The reading level of the course is in the range of 8th to 9th grade.

Course Objectives

Students are introduced to a variety of specific learning strategies, such as active listening, collaborative reading, elaboration, and active observation.

Lesson Outlines

A list of subheadings and a summary of the assignments.

Overview

Introduction

Lesson 1: Keeping a Learning Journal

- Introduction
- Why Keep a Journal?
- What Can I Write About in My Journal?
- Assignment (description of an "active" learner

Lesson 2: Understanding What Makes Us Want to Learn

- Three Stories
- Reflection on the Stories
- Discussion
- Assignment (description of a personal learning experience)

Lesson 3: Four Elements for Motivation

- Assignment (description of motivation)
- Assignment (answer questions about motivation)
- Cultivating Persistence
- Assignment (description of personal experience requiring persistence

Lesson 4: What Does It Mean to Pay Attention?

Introduction
How Do We Take in New Information?
Focusing Attention
Assignment (comparison of focused and unfocused attention)
Learning Through Listening
Assignment (listening excercise)
Active Listening Strategies
Learning Through Observing
Assignment (observation excercise)
Strategies for Paying Attention When You are Observing or Watching

Lesson 5: Learning by Paying Attention as We Read

Introduction
Collaborative Reading
Collaborative Reading--What Did You Pay Attention To?
Strategies for Paying Attention in Reading
Assignment (analysis of an article)

Lesson 6: "I Know I Really Learned It!"

Introduction
Elaboration
Analyzing the Reading
A List of Common Elaboration Strategies
Assignment (analysis of an excerpt from "Life on the Mississippi" by Mark Twain)

Lesson 7: Knowing and Remembering

Introduction
What Do These Strategies Have to do with Memory?
Active Learning
Choosing What Works for You
Review
Assignment (teaching others as a strategy for learning)
Assignment (description of most useful strategies)

Lesson 8: Organizing Strategies

Introduction
How this Section is Organized
Organizing Strategies For Readers: Using Visual Cues
Assignment (analysis of the organization of a web site)
Organizing Strategies for Readers: Discovering a Pattern
Assignment (analysis of an article)
Assignment (analysis of 4 short essays)

Course Author

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statewide literacy research and development project. She is currently the coordinator for adult learning for Bloomington Public Schools and is on the development team for Mindquest, an online high school completion program for adults. Greta holds a Masters and A.B.D. in Adult Education. She'd appreciate comments about the course and asks that you send them to her at Greta_Ploetz@mindquest.bloomington.k12.mn.us.

Learning Strategies

Introduction: What are Learning Strategies?

When you think of words associated with "strategies," what comes to mind? You might think of strategies in connection with military battles, plans to outwit the enemy and gain the territory being fought over. Or you might think of sports such as football or basketball. What plays will help you win? What's the overall game plan? Or perhaps you think of political campaigns. We hear about the Democratic or Republican campaign managers "strategizing" with committee members or special interest groups. In all of these examples, having a strategy is having a plan. It's knowing beforehand what you are going to do. And it's also evaluating the results to see if the plan worked. Did our side win the battle? Did the team we were playing or rooting for win? Did the candidate we worked for get elected? If our answers are positive, then we might infer that our strategies were successful.

Learning strategies are thoughtful approaches that help us acquire new information, knowledge and skills. They are not mysterious, hard to use or reserved for the very few lucky students who always ace their final exams. Instead, learning strategies are sensible and handy tools we can adapt to fit our own personal purposes for learning. Just as we use tools to do many kinds of work, from repairing a car to cooking a meal or using a word processor, we use strategies to be better learners.

Skill and Will: Dual Focuses in This Course

Think for a moment of a successful learner that you know. This doesn't have to be someone you knew in a school situation. It can be a parent, family member, friend, neighbor, anyone you think knows how to go about learning in a purposeful way. What makes them successful with learning? One thing you've probably noticed is that they care a lot about what they're trying to learn. It's important to them. They may have a definite reason for learning this particular thing at this time or they may have a strong interest in a topic or subject, something that fascinates them and keeps them going in their search for information or answers. This is where the idea of "will" comes in. Successful learners want to learn. The will to do so comes from within themselves. It can be supported and encouraged by others, but really effective learners cultivate inner motivation.

In addition to will or motivation, the model learner you have in mind undoubtedly has some insight into the ways he or she learns best and knows something about how to approach new learning challenges. These are the personal learning tools -- the skills or strategies -- individuals select and use when and where they're needed.

To sum up, effective learners have both the will and the skills to learn. We'll be working with these dual qualities throughout this course.

Our Four Strategies

You may wonder if this is a study skills course. The answer is that the Learning Strategies course is different from

what we usually think of as study skills. Very often study skills courses deal with note-taking, outlining, studying from a text-book, all useful skills but not our particular focus. We'll be working with four main strategies:

- **Motivation:** Knowing more about ourselves as learners and how to cultivate motivation
- **Paying Attention:** Focusing on the task at hand
- **Elaboration:** Connecting new information to what we already know
- **Organizing:** Arranging information to fit our purposes

Three Key Concepts in Learning Strategies and Other Courses

- **Inquiry-based learning**
- **Reflective learning**
- **Experience and learning**

A concept is a set of related ideas that fit together to explain or describe. The three concepts listed above form an intriguing framework for learning. Like the frame that supports and gives shape to the house or apartment you live in, this conceptual, or idea, frame supports and shapes the way you learn. You'll discover a great deal about what experts believe is important for effective learning from reading the next three paragraphs.

The first is "**inquiry-based learning**." Learning through inquiry begins by drawing on your curiosity and interest in a topic or issue. It invites you to think about the questions you have as well as those that others have or have had over time. Then it leads you into ways of investigating those questions: gathering information; thinking about what this information means; and sifting, and analyzing data before drawing conclusions or forming opinions.

How is this approach different from other ways you may have learned in the past? A major difference is that you are invited to be an active learner, seeking answers to your own questions and and drawing upon many of your own resources as you explore new ideas. This leads us right into a discussion of the next two concepts.

Reflective learning allows you to step back for a moment or two and think quietly about what you've just heard, read, or seen. Experiences you've had in the past are also food for reflection. In areas of your life other than school you undoubtedly think reflectively at many times, sometimes sharing your thoughts in conversation with family or friends. Reflecting is a very important way of understanding an experience more fully and gaining insights into your actions, thoughts, beliefs and feelings. You may bring these insights to new experiences and situations in order to make them more successful or satisfying.

Let's take an example of reflective learning. Suppose that at the place where you work your boss asks you to help train a new employee. You jump at the chance and start telling the new person all about the job. You go through everything you can think of in an hour. The next day your boss criticizes you and says the new hire was unable to carry out the work. He says you gave too much information all at once and tells you to figure out a different training approach. You sit down and think about all of this. What was wrong with the way I did it? What might I do differently? How can I start over? You think back to what you said and how you said it. After some thought, you decide that you are going to prioritize the information you give, starting with what the employee needs to know first and saving the rest for another time. You also decide that you're going to check to see if he or she is understanding before you end the training session.

You have gone through a process of reflective thinking: thinking back over an experience, examining it, asking

yourself questions, and formulating a new way of acting. You now know what you learned from this situation and you have ideas about what to do next.

In the next lessons, you'll find yourself being asked to write reflectively -- in other words, to "think back over" something you've read and to express the ideas you've gained as a result. Sometimes you'll put this reflective writing in your journal. Other times it will be part of another assignment.

Our **experience** is the raw material we draw upon as we consider new ideas, new ways of thinking or doing. It's the starting point for all new learning. Research into the way our brains function shows that we learn by connecting new information to what we already know. Think about trying to memorize a short poem in English (or whatever your native language is.) Now think about trying to learn that same poem by heart, but in a different language -- a language you don't speak or understand. Which scenario seems the easiest?

The more background we have about a topic, the less trouble we have learning more about it. A critical part of the learning process is getting in touch with what you already know. You need to know what you know! This is why some of the assignments in this course ask you to think and write about something in your experience that's relevant to a particular topic. This is one of the most important concepts about learning.

What Results Do We Have in Mind for This Course?

We expect that you will show growth in these areas:

1. Knowing more about your personal learning preferences and patterns

2. Selecting and using strategies that increase your understanding and your ability to apply new information and knowledge

3. Identifying and practicing personal approaches that strengthen your "persistance factor" in learning.

Assignment 1: Initial Questions

Think back over what you've read in this introduction. Write several questions that you have about this material and give them to your teacher. If you are working online, send the questions to your teacher through e-mail.

Then move on to Lesson One.

Learning Strategies

Lesson One: Keeping a Learning Journal

This lesson has three parts:

- Introduction
- Why Keep a Journal?
- What Can I Write About in My Journal?

Introduction

As you participate in this course, you'll notice we often ask you to write in your "Learning Journal". Perhaps you already keep a personal journal and have discovered the benefits of this type of writing for yourself. If not, you may have some questions: Why keep a journal? What is a journal? What can I write about in my journal?

Writers, scientists, philosophers, artists, and ordinary people have used journals for a long time to raise questions, speculate about things, record observations, and figure things out. Many early Americans, including Jefferson, Washington, and Franklin, kept journals as did authors such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. Major thinkers of our time -- Darwin, Freud, and Einstein -- considered their questions and proposed tentative answers in journals. Women writers who were blocked in their attempts to write and publish fiction wrote memorable journals. Other people, less well-known, but nevertheless thinkers, used journals to pour out their hearts, to have "someone" to talk to. Journal writing has become very popular in the past five to ten years as a way to get in touch with our feelings and clarify our thinking. In this course, you will start a journal that will help you to understand how you learn and what motivates you to learn.

Why Keep a Journal?

Writing helps us to understand things better. Writing is thinking! It doesn't just communicate our thinking; it shapes and enriches it. Someone once asked George Orwell, the author of 1984 and other books, the big question "Why do you write?" Orwell supposedly said, "So I know what I'm thinking."

Writing is a powerful tool for personal inquiry; in our writing we consider and articulate questions we may have

only vaguely been aware of before. Through writing we discover and give voice to thoughts never before expressed.

Keeping a journal is a basic approach, or strategy, for learning that supports all the other strategies we'll be exploring:

- Journaling helps you build motivation by helping you stay in touch with your own responses to how and what you're learning

- Journaling focuses attention; to write you must pay attention to your thoughts, feelings, and attitudes

- Journaling invites you to elaborate or expand upon your learning. Each journal entry is an exercise in elaboration: How far can I take this idea? How can I increase my understanding? What is intriguing to me about this idea?

- Journaling can help you see patterns in your thinking and can bring form and order to thoughts that may be fragmented or unclear to you

To sum up, your journal will be both a place and a tool for thinking. Use it to raise questions about what you're doing in a course or project, to reflect on the learning you've gained and make connections to other areaas of your life. Journaling can sharpen your awareness of what is happening around you, both personally and academically.

What Can I Write About in My Journal?

We'll suggest ideas for you to write about as you move through this course, but you may also want to use your journal in ways that suit you personally. Here are some of the kinds of things we may suggest or that you may want to do:

1. Observe. Record, in your own words, what you find yourself noticing about your own learning or about what is going on around you that is relevant to what you're learning.

2. Speculate. Take time to wonder "What if?" In a journal you can just let your mind conjure up all sorts of possibilities and solutions to problems you're considering.

3. Question. Good thinkers ask lots of questions, probably more than they are able to answer. Being able to see your questions helps you to sharpen, clarify, and understand them better. In a journal, you can write about what you don't know as well as what you do know. Someone has suggested that another name for a journal is a "doubt book." Don't be afraid to write "What's that supposed to mean?" and "I just don't get this."

4. Be aware. Be conscious of yourself as a learner, thinker, and writer. Your journal is a place where you can actually monitor and watch yourself grow in self-awareness. You can encourage yourself to become more aware by asking lots of questions and trying out lots of answers: What am I learning here? What do I remember about what I just read? What has any of this got to do with reality? With me?

5. Make connections. Try using your journal to make the study of any subject relevant to everything else in your life. Make connections to other things that you are studying and other events in your life. Journals are a good place to do this because your writing doesn't follow a set pattern or format. You can let your thoughts take you where they will.

6. Dialogue. Talk to your teacher or teachers through the journal. All of us are learners, teachers and students alike. In a journal we can share our thoughts with each other, get to know each other better, and understand more about what's going on in our minds.

7. Pose and solve problems. Are you learning about something that has you puzzled? Is there something you want to investigate further? What answers to these and other questions are you finding? What do you think is a solution to the problem you're considering? Evidence of posing and solving problems shows that you're alive, thoughtful, and committed to learning.

8. Synthesize. Journals invite us to put together what we're learning, to tie things together. Taking a few minutes each week to reflect on what you've been thinking and writing about during the week in a particular course or project will help you to make sense out of this new learning.

We think you'll find that journal writing gets easier the more you do it. In fact, it may very well become something that you really enjoy doing and find very rewarding. Journal writing exercises your mind in much the same way that running or swimming exercises your body. After awhile, it just feels good and you won't want to stop!

Assignment 1: Journal Topic

Write a description of someone you admire because he or she is an active learner. This person might be someone that you have worked with, or who has influenced your career or your career decisions. It might be an inspirational teacher. Or it might be someone who has been a mentor to you in some particular area or interest in your life. Pick someone that you know well enough that you can describe their learning process. You might even want to interview the person to find out more details about their learning style and learning preferences.

Begin by describing who this person is. Then comment on these questions:

- What area or areas in life is this person interested in learning about?
- How do they go about their learning? What do they do?
- What do you think keeps them going? Persisting in learning?
- What are some of the main skills this person uses in order to learn?
- How has this person influenced or inspired you as a learner?

After you've written this in your journal, e-mail or give a copy to your teacher.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Two:
Understanding What Makes Us Want to Learn

This lesson has three parts:

- **Three Stories**
- **Reflection on the Stories**
- **Discussion**

Three Stories

Malcolm X

In his autobiography, Malcolm X writes about teaching himself to read when he was in prison. Something deep inside was driving him to learn how to read. He'd gone to school off and on, but he'd never felt it had much to do with the life around him. For years he'd been on the streets, surviving from day to day, hanging out with people involved in many kinds of illegal activities. Now in prison there were no classes to go to, no teacher to help him along, or easy-to-read books to start off with. So how did he do it?

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies.

It had really begun back in the Charlestown Prison, when Bimbi (a friend) first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversation he was in, and I had tried to emulate him. But every book I picked up had few sentences which didn't contain anywhere from one to nearly all of the words that might as well have been in Chinese. When I just skipped those words, of course, I really ended up with little idea of what the book said. So I had come to the Norfolk Prison Colony still going through only book-reading motions. Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, unless I had received the motivation that I did.

I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary -- to study, to learn some new words. I was lucky enough to reason also that I should try to improve my penmanship. It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line. It was both ideas together that moved me to request a dictionary along with some tablets and pencils from the Norfolk Prison Colony school.

I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary's pages. I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know which words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying.

In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page, down to the punctuation marks.

I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything printed on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.

I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words -- immensely proud to realize that not only had I written so much at one time, but I'd written words that I never knew were in the world. Moreover, with a little effort, I also could remember what many of these words meant.....I was so fascinated that I went on -- I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet -- and I went on into the B's. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary.....

I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge.

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass, one of the greatest Black leaders in this country, was born into slavery. There were no schools for these children, no hope for getting an education. But Frederick was possessed of a desire to read and write. He writes in his autobiography Out of Slavery that he knew if he wanted to help his people gain freedom he would have to be literate. His mistress on the plantation where he lived had started teaching him to read, but after only a few lessons the master stopped all that. Here are the words Frederick uses to describe the excitement of learning to read and his great disappointment when the lessons ended:

Very soon after I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Auld, she very kindly commenced to teach me the A,B,C. After I had learned this, she assisted me in learning to spell words of three or four letters. Just at this point of my progress, Mr. Auld found out what was going on, and at once forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further, telling her, among other things, that it was unlawful, as well as unsafe, to teach a slave to read. To use his own words, further, he said, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A nigger should know nothing but to obey his master -- to do as he is told. Learning would spoil the best nigger in the word."....these words sank deep into my heart, stirred up sentiments within that lay slumbering, and called into existence a whole new train of thought....From that moment I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom. It was just what I wanted...

Frederick goes on to talk about how he pursued his desire to read:

"The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read.

> When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me...I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house....This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge....

And how he learned to write:

> The idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenters, after hewing, and getting a piece of timber ready for use, write on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended. When a piece of timber was intended for the larboard side, it would be marked thus -- "L." When a piece was for the starboard side, it would be marked thus -- "S." When a piece was for starboard side forward, it would be marked thus -- "S.F."......I soon learned the names of these letters and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard. I immediately commenced copying them, and in a short time was able to make the four letters named. After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, "I don't believe you. Let me see you try it." I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lesson in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk..."

Helen Keller

Our third story is told by Helen Keller, the remarkable woman who was deaf, mute, and blind and who as a child was locked within a world she could not know. Her prison was her body. Annie Sullivan, the young teacher who came to help Helen, found a frightened, angry eight-year old child who had no way of communicating with others. The idea of language was unknown to her. Even the simple fact that objects had names, that these names were symbols that carried meaning was totally unknown to Helen. The following well-known passage from Keller's autobiography The Story of My Life describes the incident that changed all that:

> The most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrasts between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old....
>
> Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in, and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore...and you waited with beating heart for something to happen? I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding-line, and had no way of knowing how near the harbor was. "Light! give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul...
>
> We walked down the path to the well-house, attracted by the fragrance of the honeysuckle with which it was covered. Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten -- a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free! There were barriers still, it is true, but barriers that could in time be swept away.
>
> I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought. As we returned to the house every object which I touched seemed to quiver with life. That was because I saw everything with the strange, new sight that had come to me....I learned a great many new words that day. I do not remember what they all were; but I do know that mother, father, sister, teacher were among them --

words that were to make the world blossom for me..."

Reflection on the Stories

What common themes run through these three stories? Take a minute to reflect on this question. Jot down your ideas before going on to the next paragraphs; then compare what you've written to what follows below. Your ideas may be similar or they may be different. That's okay. The important focus here is to reflect for a moment on what struck you as significant in the stories and then to consider another point of view.

Discussion

One theme that connects these stories is that all three people were confined in some way and their lack of freedom contributed to the intense frustration they felt with their own lives. They couldn't be or do what they wanted to because of this entrapment. A second theme is that they desperately wanted this to change. You could say that it was a matter of life and death to them. They all knew this about themselves, even Helen who had no words to say it. She could only feel it inside as some nameless panic.

Because of their intense desire to learn, they used whatever means were at hand, even when this meant humiliation or taking huge risks. That didn't matter, because their longing was so great, the longing to know and to be able to communicate and thus to change their lives. This is a third theme.

To put this into the language of this course, we could say that their will to learn was so strong that nothing could deter them from their goals. This is not to say that they weren't often discouraged or afraid, or that they had set-backs, or that they sometimes felt that they'd never make it. When you read their autobiographies, you see that they had these thoughts and feelings throughout their lives. What kept them going through difficult times, however, had a lot to do with their inner motivation or will.

Assignment

You've just read several autobiographical stories about three very different learning experiences. Now we'd like you to tell a story of your own about a learning experience that stands out in your memory because of its significance to you.

Listed below are some ideas to help you think about the writing. Choose one idea, or some combination of ideas, that appeals to you, and describe a particular incident that happened to you. Tell the story in such a way that your readers will be able to picture the event in their minds and feel as if they were there. To do this you need to give us details about the experience: who was involved, what was the situation, where and when did this take place, what exactly happened, how did you respond, what were your thoughts and feelings.

Write a one to two page story in which you:

- Describe an incident or event you remember as being one of the most exciting, rewarding, positive or meaningful learning experiences you've ever had. Something that felt like a "high" for you. A time when something really significant and important was happening to you as a learner. This can be something that happened in school or out of school.

- Describe a time when you were ready to give up trying to learn something: a skill, subject, or concept --

a time when you hit bottom and thought "There's no point in going on with this. I'm never going to get it." Why did you keep on learning? What stopped you from giving up? Who or what helped you through this low point in your life as a learner?

- Describe a learning experience where you felt valued and supported as a learner. Was someone else involved with you? A friend? Teacher? Parent? If so, what do you remember about what they said and did? What was particularly helpful to you? Why was this so significant for you?

After you finish your first draft of the story, give it or e-mail the draft to your teacher. When you receive your teacher's comments, complete any suggested revisions and return the revised version to your teacher.

In a separate paragraph, describe which of the three stories you read was most meaningful for you? Why? Send or give this to your teacher as well.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Three: More On Motivation

This lesson has two parts:

- Four Elements for Motivation
- Cultivating Persistence

Four Elements for Motivation

Motivation is undoubtedly an important topic for students and teachers, but it is also very interesting to a lot of other people. Advertisers want to know how to "motivate" potential customers to buy their products, and they spend millions of dollars a year trying to do this in many ways. Doctors and others in the medical field want to "motivate" their patients to adopt specific health practices so they prepare newsletters, brochures, television ads and other promotions to move people in certain directions. The clergy want to "motivate" their members to hold certain moral values and behave in certain ways. We could go on and on; it seems as if just about everyone wants someone to think or act in certain ways. Much time and money has been spent on research into motivation, on trying to discover why people behave as they do.

Assignment

Where does motivation come from? Can someone else give it to you? Do you think there are things you can do to help yourself become more motivated to reach a certain goal?

Think about these questions and write a paragraph in your journal describing what you think about each one. Give or e-mail your paragraphs to your teacher.

Here's a formula for motivation that we can think and talk about:

Motivation = Success + Choice + Value + Enjoyment

Let's unpack that a bit. The first element "**success**" has to do with our wanting to be good at learning. If someone truly doesn't care about being a successful learner, then chances are very good he or she won't be. However, the reality is that most people do want to succeed at learning. After all, a lot depends on it, including earning a living, having friends, and knowing how to do things we need to do. So we can pretty much agree that most people, most of the time, want to be successful learners. This is a constant influence on all of us. If we don't experience success, our motivation for learning will usually be adversely affected. We get discouraged, "lose heart," and sometimes drop away from what we're trying to learn. Many research studies support this idea.

The second component in our formula "**choice**" means that we need to feel we have a say in our learning and that others will listen to what we say. Think of how you'd feel if you were told exactly what you have to learn and could never pursue any of your own interests. You'd probably feel pretty miserable, as if you didn't count for much. When we feel we have choices that are respected by others and we are having some success our motivation to learn thrives.

"**Value**" means that we take the learning activity seriously and perceive it as worthwhile and meaningful. We may not always find it exciting, but it's important that what we're learning has some degree of intrinsic value; that is, it matters to us as individuals. The values we place on learning may be economic, intellectual, personal, or social . We may notice more or less emphasis on these individual values depending upon what we are trying to learn and how we intend to use our learning. Sometimes we are driven to learn because we want a job that pays better than what we're currently making. Sometimes we read books and magazines in an effort to learn something about a particular subject that we are very interested in. And sometimes we join a class or go to a workshop because we want to be with other people or make new friends. We are motivated when we have successfully learned something we wanted to learn as well as something we value.

The last element "**enjoyment**" is the capstone for motivation. Enjoyment can take many forms, can be very or less intense, can be continuous or sporadic. If the learning activity is pleasurable, we tend to want to stay with it. It's interesting to consider that there are two opposing views we sometimes hear about this point: Some people say "Learning needs to be fun" and others say "Students have to jump through the hoops, whether they like it or not. Learning is not supposed to be fun." What do you think about this? We think that people can learn even when they're not enjoying the experience. Sometimes there are skills we need to acquire and we might not be wild about putting forth the effort, but getting a regular paycheck, taking care of a child , or fixing a car might depend upon it. So we learn because we have an immediate need to know or do something. However, it sure helps us to stick with something over a period of time when we're able to find pleasure and satisfaction in what we're learning.

To sum up then: if we feel successful in learning what we want to learn , if the learning has intrinsic value for us, and if the learning experience gives us personal pleasure, we are on our way to becoming life long learners.

Motivation = Success + Choice + Value + Enjoyment.

Assignment

Write a paragraph answering the questions below.

How well do you see this formula working for you?

How can teachers create a learning environment where these four qualities are usually present?

How can students create this kind of environment for themselves?

Write your answers in your journal and then give them or send them to your teacher.

Cultivating Persistence

Sometimes simply identifying the things that we see standing in our way of accomplishing something helps to diminish their effect on us. We can cope better with the problems we have the courage to face. We can also open up some options for ourselves, other avenues that lead to success. Have you experienced any of the following problems as a student?

- Computers that don't always work right
- Trouble using software
- Feeling isolated
- Being distracted by other students
- Not being very interested in the classes or materials
- Juggling family, work, and Mindquest studies
- Working toward goals that seem like a long way from where you are now

These are just some of the stumbling blocks you may face at one time or another as you work toward your goal of more education and training. When you're having problems of this nature, talk to one or more of your teachers. Let them know what's troubling you. They can help you find ways to deal with the difficulties and get through your "dry spell."

Some morning you might just wake up feeling totally unmotivated. Is there anything you can do about it? Do you just have to wait until the spirit moves you before you can get going. The answer is NO! NO! NO! There are a lot of tricks that you can use to help yourself get and stay moving. Some of the best ideas for staying motivated come from the area of sports. Reprinted below is an article from a magazine called Velo-News. It's all about how to toughen up your motivation muscles. As you read the article, think about how the messsage fits with your work in school. Draw as many parallels as you can from cycling to learning.

Cycling Psychology

Motivation, the last frontier. With enough of it any ordinary person can become a world class athlete. Without it the same person could end up begging for change downtown. Even a tremendously talented rider will go nowhere without motivation. How do some riders always seem to be so motivated? What are the sources of their motivation? This has been a central theme of sports psychology since its beginning when Triplett studied the effects of audience and competition on performance in the late nineteenth century. Though a great deal has been written on motivation since Triplett, it is still an individual construct. As an athlete you need to identify what motivates you and cultivate the sources of your motivation. Here are a few popular methods.

<u>GOALS.</u> One of the best sources of motivation is setting goals. Be specific and put them down on paper. Define your goals clearly and make them attainable. Short term goals are more important than long term goals and should be even more precisely defined. Set short term goals for things like going on a good ride this afternoon, doing five sprints, bettering your time on a known course, etc. Set long term goals such as

training at least five days a week, placing in specific races, upgrading. DO NOT STRESS WINNING when defining your goals. Instead stress enjoying the ride and doing your best in every ride and race.

GROUP TRAINING. Training with friends, racing as a team, and all the other social benefits of our sport are also great for motivation. This is what clubs should be all about. With or without a club, group training is vastly more effective than individual training. The same intensity that can make solo training a challenge comes naturally in a good group. Ever notice how easy a smooth rotating paceline seems, until you arrive home to find a surprising soreness in the quadriceps? Why beat yourself over the head when a few phone calls (or e-mails) will generally find plenty of like-minded compatriots. Try to limit solo training to between 10 percent and 50 percent of total miles.

RACING. The best European pros actually do very little training. Need I say more? There simply is no better way to improve cycling fitness. Whether racing to place or to train, the savvy racer will do all the racing his or her motivation allows.

REGULARITY. It's nice to be regular, in more ways than one :-). Regularity makes difficult tasks easy. If you make it a point to ride every day, or at least five times a week (to be competitive), making the daily ride will become automatic. Riding at the same time every day can also be helpful, but be careful not to become a slave to the schedule.

As well as cycling books and videos, new bike parts, new clothing, new roads, nice weather, losing weight, seeing friends, getting out of the city and breathing fresh air, riding hard and feeling good, and especially that great feeling of accomplishment and relaxation at the end of every ride that makes life beautiful.

While high levels of excitation (motivation energy) are generally better for shorter rides and track races, be careful not to get over-excited before longer, harder races. Stay relaxed and conserve precious energy for that crosswind section or sprint where you'll need all the strength you've got. Learn how psyched you need to be to do your best and be aware of when you are over or under aroused.

It's not uncommon, especially in early season races, to be so nervous before the start that that fatigue sets in early or even before the race. Too much stress can make it difficult to ride safely and should be recognized and controlled immediately. If you find yourself becoming too stressed before a race, try stretching, talking to friends, finding a quiet place to warm-up, or a crowded place -- depending on your inclination. Remember that this stress will disappear as soon as the race starts. Racing takes too much concentration to spare any for worrying.

Every athlete needs to be adept in stress management. One technique used to reduce competitive anxiety is imagery, also known as visualization. While mental practice has been credited with miraculous improvements in fine motor skills (archery, tennis) its greatest value in gross motor sports like cycling lies in stress reduction.

Actually winning a race can also help put an end to excessive competitive anxiety. But if you have never won, nervousness may be keeping you from that more rewarding place on the podium.

If you find yourself getting overstressed when thinking about winning, or even riding a race, try this. Find a quiet, relaxing place to sit and think about racing. Second, picture yourself driving to the race in a very relaxed and poised state of mind. Continue visualizing the day progressing into the race and going well until you detect some tension. THEN STOP. Do not let yourself get excited at all. End the visualization session and try it again the next day. Continue this DAILY until you can picture yourself racing and winning without any stress. If this seems like a lot of work, evaluate just how much you want to win a bike race.

Visualization is not meant to replace on-the-bike training but can make that training pay off in a big way. Eastern European research has found that athletes improve most quickly is fisual training comprises fifty to seventy-five percent of the total time spent training! Like any training, imagery will only pay off if you do it regularly and frequently. My French club coach always used to tell us, "Believe it and it will come true."

(C) 1989, Roger Marquis (marquis@roble.com) See also Velo-News, 3-91

Assignment

Write a paragraph in your journal in which you describe a time when you stuck with something that was hard to do or that you didn't really want to do. Maybe it was a job you hated. Maybe it was a difficult subject in school. Maybe your parents wanted you to learn a musical instrument. What helped you stay with it? Why didn't you just quit? What valuable lessons did you learn from this experience that you could apply to your current studies?

Next, in your journal, describe any problems you've encountered or that you foresee, in persisting with your education.

Send both paragraphs in an e-mail to your teacher or give them to your teacher on a sheet of paper.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Four:
What Does It Mean To "Pay Attention?"

This lesson has five parts:

- Introduction
- How Do We Take In New Information?
- Focusing Attention
- Learning Through Listening
- Learning Through Observing

Introduction

"You're not going to learn anything if you're not paying attention!"

What do you think about this assertion? Does it sound so commonplace that it doesn't deserve serious consideration? You might be thinking "Well, naturally I have to pay attention!" If you're lost, for example, and ask others for directions but fail to listen carefully when they explain how to get where you want to go, you'll still be lost. Or if someone is showing you how to operate a chain saw, you'll probably really concentrate on what they're saying or run the risk of a very serious accident. So far the assertion "You're not going to learn anything if you're not paying attention" seems to be a sensible one. When we apply it to the business of learning something academic, however, it loses some of its punch. Maybe we've heard too many teachers or parents too often say "Pay attention!" so that the words carry little weight for us. Or maybe we take the whole matter for granted, as a given that we don't question or think about much.

As you read this and the next lesson and as you work through the various assignments, try to make a conscious effort to be aware of how and when you pay, or don't pay, attention. Use this time to get more in touch with the way you focus. Notice the way thoughts often run through your mind willy-nilly, unbeckoned. Or how you sometimes fall into a robot-like way of seeing, reading or thinking. Notice how often you have to pull yourself back to whatever you're supposed to be attending to. Developing this kind of self-awareness is an essential first step to being an attentive learner.

We're asking you to pay attention in a particular way: purposefully, in the present moment, and

non-judgmentally. Purposefully, because you have a definite task to accomplish -- to learn about something. In the present moment, because if you're thinking about what happened yesterday or worrying about a future event, you're not actually experiencing what is going on right now. And non-judgmentally, because an open mind invites new ideas and allows you to consider them, to "try them on for size."

What are some characteristics of learners who pay attention? They are alert, watchful, observant, and mindful. They know what to pay attention to and what to ignore. They know what is important to focus on and what is not. They shut out distractions and create for themselves a space in which to think and learn. All of this takes us back to the subject of motivation; it takes some effort of will to pay attention. It doesn't just happen.

How Do We Take In New Information?

Suppose you want to learn more about the candidates who are running for mayor in the city or town you live in. Or about how to care for your sick child. Or maybe you're concerned about climate changes and you want to find out more about solar warming. How would you go about getting the information you need to make decisions or form opinions? You could ask other people, a friend who has some experience or knowledge in the area you're interested in, or an expert such as a doctor. You could listen to a radio interview of the candidates for the mayoral office or to a scientist talking about climate changes or watch similar programs on television. You could go to a political rally or a lecture. You could read information in the newspaper, magazines, brochures, or books.

We all use a variety of methods to get the information we want and need. Sometimes we listen, sometimes we observe, and sometimes we read. No matter how the information is presented, however, we have to pay attention or we're just wasting our time.

In this and the next lesson, we'll spend some time talking about paying attention in three common learning modes: listening, observing, and reading.

Focusing Attention

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who was only half listening to you? Instead of watching your face and eyes as you talked, she looked around at other people and at the surroundings. She might even have talked to someone else as you talked. Sometimes she didn't hear all that you said and asked you to repeat yourself. It wouldn't be surprising if her lack of attention irritated you so that you felt like saying, "Pay attention. I'm talking to you!"

Or, consider this situation. You want to watch a show on television. You're just getting engrossed in the show when others come into the room. Now there is so much going on around you that you can't hear, so you join in the conversation until they leave. When it's quiet again, you return to the show, but now you realize that you've missed the most important event in the plot and lost the flow of the story. "What just happened here?" you wonder. Since you lost the focus of your attention, you missed important information and the connections that make it all fit together.

Sometimes it seems relatively easy to lose our focus while other times we are riveted to the event at hand. What makes the difference? Think of some times when you had no difficulty focusing your attention. Then think of other times when your attention kept drifting even though you tried to focus. Then complete the following assignment:

Assignment

In your journal, describe a time in the past day or two when you remember yourself paying close attention to

something. What were you doing? How important was what you were doing? What were the results?

Then describe a time, also in the past day or two, when you couldn't seem to keep your mind on target. What was a big difference between these two examples? Why could you focus one time and not the other?

Give or e-mail your comments to your teacher.

Learning Through Listening

Unless we are hearing impaired or deaf, researchers estimate that sixty to seventy percent of all the information we take in comes to us through our ears. Listening is the most common way we learn. This might be a surprise to many people who think of books as the main source of learning. However, other people are the resources we tap most for information about things or about how to do things. One of the key ways we learn from others is by listening to what they have to say.

Our auditory sense is one that is always open to stimuli; we can't close our ears as we can our eyes. So how is it that in this world we live in, where we are bombarded with a melange of sounds, we manage to select those we want to focus on? How do we do that?

Try this concentration exercise. Take a few minutes, sit back in your chair, and relax. All you have to do right now is listen. Carefully. Concentrate only on what you can hear. Start off by concentrating on the sounds that seem to you to be the farthest away. What are you hearing. After a minute or so, open your eyes and jot down what you heard.

Now close your eyes again and this time concentrate on the sounds that seem to be the closest to you. Listen carefully for a minute. Then open your eyes and write down what you heard.

Reflect on this experience: What was different about listening in this way and ordinary listening? Do you think you noticed more? If so, why? Were there some sounds you might have missed if you hadn't been concentrating this way? What does this all have to do with learning?

This exercise asked you to focus, to deliberately concentrate on a particular part of a general situation. As you were doing this, some of these thoughts may have been going through your mind:

- How can I tell the difference between "near" and "far away" sounds?
- What is making these sounds?
- I can't let my mind wander -- I have to think about what I'm supposed to be doing.
- I wonder what's the point of doing this.

You were probably carrying on some sort of dialogue like this with yourself, asking questions and trying to come up with reasonable answers. This is one of the most important strategies good listeners use: they get themselves involved with the subject at hand and they ask a lot of questions about what's happening. They don't just let words or other sounds wash over them and hope something sticks. We might say they're assertive about listening. They try to manage the listening process. They are active learners.

Assignment

Sometime during the next 24 hours, listen to a newscast on the radio. We'd like you to listen to the public radio station **KNOW, 91.9** on your FM dial. There are a variety of programs you can choose from. Here are some: (The

times given are all on Monday through Friday.)

- Mid-Day Report -- From 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
- Talk of the Nation with Ray Saurez -- from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.
- Fresh Air -- from 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
- Marketplace -- 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.
- All Things Considered -- From 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.

If none of these work for you, choose another newscast or interview program on another station. It is also possible to substitute lectures or non-fiction books on tape for this assignment but they require prior approval by your instructor.

Listen for at least 15 minutes, keeping in mind that you will be writing a summary that includes the following points:

What was the main topic?

What were three big ideas?

What was the purpose of the newstory or interview: to persuade, to explain, to describe, to entertain?

Write a half-page summary. Then, ask yourself what you did while you were listening to be able to remember what you heard. Make a list of at least 3 strategies you used to stay focused. Give or send your summary and the three techniques to your teacher.

Active Listening Strategies

Here are some strategies you might have used:

As you're listening:

1. Ask yourself questions, such as

What is the speaker trying to get across to me? What is the main idea or ideas?

What evidence does he or she give to support this idea or ideas?

How does the speaker seem to feel about the topic or issue? Supportive? Critical? Skeptical?

How does he or she want me to feel?

Does the speaker sound reasonable? believable? accurate?

2. Take notes

Keep paper and pencil handy for note taking and write down those points you want to remember.

Review your notes when you finish listening.

3. Be alert for clues the speaker gives you

Does the speaker use certain words or phrases more than once?

Does the speaker's tone of voice or inflection emphasize certain ideas?

You probably already intuitively use some or all of these techniques when you're listening. You can improve your skills, however, by being aware that these are the strategies that good listeners also use. And you can select those that really work well for you. Here's a short list for you to include in your Learning Journal:

- Know why you are listening: to remember? to know more about? to understand? to be able to do? Keep your purpose in mind as you listen.
- Listen for important or main ideas.
- Ask yourself questions as you're listening.
- Take notes. Writing things down is one of the best memory tools we can use.

Learning Through Observing

Television. Videos. Movies. Watching a friend change a tire or bake cookies or diaper a baby. Noticing body language, what someone is wearing, the mood your friend seems to be in. All these are examples of how we learn visually. As with listening, we remember most vividly what we've seen when we are focused and when we have an important reason to watch. We can easily apply listening strategies to the act of observing. We'd like you to test them out in the following assignment.

Assignment

- Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter. Your editor has asked you to write a human interest story about two (or more) people who work together.

You can do this assignment at a shopping mall or anywhere people work together: a restaurant, service station, factory, office, construction site, or so on. You could even go the place where you work or used to work. You decide. The main thing is to set aside observation time when you can devote your full attention to the process and are not on the job yourself.

Before deciding on where to make your observations, think carefully about whether to ask permission. In most cases, you should have permission from the people you observe and perhaps from their supervisors as well, especially if you are going to be noticed.

Try to find a work place with these characteristics:

Two or more people working together

Working at something you understand at least a little bit; not something novel or strange to you

Where you can see and hear well enough to catch some details

Where you can observe for at least 30 minutes

Before you go out to observe, make some notes for yourself about a few things you'll be sure to look for. Include these matters in your list:

> What characteristics did you notice in the people you watched? Consider age, gender, dress and so on. How much difference was there between or among them?
>
> What did they do? What did their work consist of? What were they making or providing?
>
> What relationship did they have to one another? Was one a boss, in some sense? How could you tell?
>
> Were there any times when they paid special attention to what they were doing? Did you notice times when what one of them did affected what another did?

Report your observations in three paragraphs or more. Begin with a "hook" to win your reader's attention and then provide a description of who you observed, where and what their work included. You can probably do this is a single paragraph.

Then go on to describe other things you noticed about the people and the situation. This will take at least one paragraph but probably more, depending on the number of your main points.

Conclude with some summary and assessment ideas.

When you have finished writing your article, think about the following questions and write the answers in your journal:

> When you felt your attention wandering, what did you do? Did this help you to focus?
>
> What questions did you ask yourself as you were doing the observation?
>
> How would your impressions have been different if you had visited the mall with no definite purpose in mind? Would you have noticed the same things?

Either e-mail or give your article about the mall and your answers to the questions above to your teacher .

Strategies for Paying Attention When You're Observing or Watching

A summary of strategies to use in observing or watching include the following. You might add these to your journal.

1. Know what your purpose or purposes for watching or observing is:

> to remember?
>
> to know more about?
>
> to understand?
>
> to be able to do something?

2. Keep this purpose or purposes in mind as you observe.

3. Notice details -- the more specific the better.

4. Ask yourself questions as you're watching to keep yourself focused.

5. Take notes.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Five:
Learning By Paying Attention As We Read

This lesson has four parts:

- Introduction
- Collaborative Reading
- What Did You Pay Attention To?
- Strategies for Paying Attention in Reading

Introduction

Whether we're working on a lesson in this course, taking a college course, using a manual to understand new computer softwear, or looking up a subject in the encyclopedia, we're learning through reading. Knowing how to get and use information from the printed page and the electronic screen are critical skills in today's world.

Many students say that their biggest problem with reading is remembering what they read. One solution to this common complaint is turning up the volume on attentiveness. Reading without focused attention is not really reading at all; it is simply a physical activity involving the mindless and idle moving of one's eyes across the words on a page. In order to be taking in information from print, we need to be actively involved in making sense of the words and phrases a writer is using. Another way of saying this is that we need to be active partners with the writer in making or creating meaning from the text.

If you think of yourself as part of a writer-reader team, with a responsibility to pay attention to the clues the writer gives you and to question what the writer says, you are well on the way to being an effective learner. Reading in this way is a lot different from just moving your eyes across the page. You become an active learner; you are doing something to make sense of what you read and to remember what you read. In the next part of this lesson, you'll explore some strategies to help you focus your attention as you read.

Collaborative Reading

We're going to try something now that we call "collaborative reading" to illustrate what we mean by paying attention to text. Collaborative reading in a classroom involves the teacher (or a student) modeling the thinking process used during reading. The model reader literally "thinks out loud," sharing his or her own reactions, questions, and insights as they occur while reading. The purpose of all this is to "open up" the reader's mind so that others can hear what's going on inside. When we use collaborative reading online, our comments and questions (the reader thinking out loud) appear in blue print.

This is how the reader's comments will look.

In this activity, we ask you to follow along, paying attention to the thinking processes we show you. You'll be able to see into the model reader's mind and observe the process of considering multiple ideas and images, asking questions, and making connections to what is already known.

As you read, have a piece of paper and a pencil handy to take notes about your own thoughts. We'll talk about this when we finish the article.

Jest for the Health of It

by Susan Goodman

I don't get this title. I thought for a minute that it said "Just for the Hell of It" but it says "Jest for the Health of it." The word jest reminds me of 'jester' and I know that's someone who clowns around and makes people laugh. Kings used to have jesters. Maybe this title means "Have fun because it's healthy for you." Well, I'll read on and see if this is what the article is about. Think I'll browse through first though and see if I can get an idea of the author's main points. Maybe I'll take a quick glance at the subtitles. Maybe I'll also have a piece of chocolate while I'm reading, "jest for the health of it."

Introduction

Your friend comes up to you and asks if you've heard what Tom replied to the English teacher when she asked him the meaning of "derange." You haven't, but you want to. He delivers the punch line and you groan -- but then together you laugh.

It isn't just your mouth or vocal cords that are getting a humorous workout. When you laugh, your chest, thorax, and abdominal muscles contract along with your diaphragm, heart and lungs. When you really let go and howl, your blood pressure soars from an average of 120 to about 200. Your pulse rate doubles from 60 to 120 beats per minute. Laughter pumps more adrenaline into your bloodstream. It may also cause endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, to flow through your body.

Think I was right; this is all about what laughing does for your body. I wonder if people have actually done research on this. The word 'endorphins' is interesting. I had no idea my body could produce its own painkiller. I wonder what the punch line to the joke was. Funny she never told us.

Good Exercise

People always knew that a good giggle could brighten any day, but now science tells us it can do much more than that. For one thing, laughter is good exercise. When you just read about what happens when you laugh, you might have thought it resembled your body's efforts when playing tennis or going up for a jump shot. If so, you were not far from wrong. Even mild laughter is good exercise, explains William F. Fry Jr., MD...a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University. A hearty laugh stimulates almost every system in your body. It helps you breathe more deeply, bringing oxygen to the blood and expelling carbon dioxide. Laughter has even been called a form of internal jogging. All these benefits seem reason enough to run to

the circus or to a Pee Wee Herman movie. Yet laughter improves health in additional ways that can't easily be measured by a blood pressure cuff. The amazing story of Norman Cousins is an example.

I've never thought of laughing as "exercise." After all, we don't really even need to move very much to laugh. But the second paragraph really gives some strong examples of how laughing affects our bodies. "Stimulates almost every system in your body" -- that's pretty impressive. I like the term "internal jogging." Really helps me picture this.

Mind Over Matter

In 1964, Cousins, an editor of Saturday Review, was told he had a crippling spinal disease and a one-in-500 chance for survival. Cousins rejected the traditional medical approach in favor of his own laugh-yourself-to-heal cure. He checked into a hotel with lots of funny books, tapes of Marx Brothers' movies, and reruns of the old television show "Candid Camera." Regular laughter not only gave him some pain-free time to sleep; it also helped him beat the odds and make a full recovery. At first medical science put cases like Cousins' in the same category as faith healing and wearing copper bracelets to cure arthritis. Now, they are putting humor where it belongs: in places that help sick people get well. St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, for instance, created a 'Living Room' complete with funny books and magazines and live performances by comics and magicians. Patients are welcome to come to the room for a little comic relief. Other hospitals wheel carts of funny stuff, from video tapes to comic books, around to patients.

What is the big idea here? I think it's that Cousins used laughter to get well and he succeeded. He must have been a remarkable man.

Stress Reducing

How can laughter actually reduce stress? What happens physically to our bodies?

Just like jogging and other forms of exercise, laughing helps reduce stress. You see, once laughing stops, your muscles are much more relaxed than they were before you started. Your heartbeat and blood pressure also fall to lower levels. With all these bodily functions running at a low and easy pace, you can feel a little slower and easier yourself. Researchers now know that laughter can relieve certain types of headaches, even help lessen hypertension. Psychologist Jeffrey Goldstein of Temple University even believes laughter, with its reduction of stress and hypertension, helps people with a good sense of humor live longer.

Well, that isn't always true. What about John Candy? But assuming they are right about most people, how many ways does laughter reduce stress? I'm going to go back and count them. It relaxes muscles, makes heartbeat and blood pressure drop. You feel relaxed. What about helping with physical problems? I see two examples: headaches and hypertension.

Laughter and Learning

Are they implying that a person can learn by laughing? This sounds pretty far-fetched to me.

Before you get set to snicker, wait! Let us stretch laughter's list of good points even further. Does the idea of chortling your way to better grades tickle your fancy? A study conducted by Dr. Dolf Zillmann at Indiana University found that children learn better and remember more when lessons are mixed with laughter. For one thing, humor keeps their attention focused upon the material. Also, everybody is more willing to enter into an activity wholeheartedly if they think they are going to have a good time. People with a full-blown funny bone reap its rewards long after they graduate from school. Studies have shown that a sense of humor is the most consistent characteristic among executives promoted in major companies. Scientists have found that if you smile, you are more likely to be hired for a job. You are also more likely to be trusted once in that job.

What's the one thing that really grabbed me in this section? I think it was the sentence about humor keeping attention focused upon the material because it's exactly what we're talking about in this whole lesson. They're saying that laughing helps us to do that and so we learn more. And my question about research is getting

answered; someone did a study on the effects of laughter on children in school.

Prescription for Mirth

'Mirth' is another word for humor, isn't it? This next part is probably about ways to have a good time.

Sounds like it's time to put a little more humor in your life, doesn't it? Mad Magazine, funny movies, and the daily newspaper comics will help, but it's also important to develop your own internal resources Here are a few suggestions:

I see there are numbered items ahead. A list. Something to pay special attention to.

1. Adopt a playful attitude. Keep your mind open to silly thoughts. If you're too worried about being cool to appear silly, remember that the word silly itself comes from the Old English word 'saelig' meaning happy, prosperous, and blessed.

2. Think funny. Try to see the amusing side of every situation, especially ones that could otherwise be difficult. So when you discover you left your homework at home after you're already late for school because you stained your brand new white shirt which you only put on because you ripped your favorite sweater, make a joke out of the whole thing. It sure beats crying.

3. Laugh at yourself and take yourself lightly, but don't make jokes that put yourself or others down. And make sure to take important responsibilities seriously. After that, a dose of humor makes all of life's worries and burdens a little lighter.

4. Make others laugh. Laughter is contagious; making others happy often makes you feel happy. So pass on a good joke when you hear one. Some say that health and happiness aren't laughing matters, but maybe they should be.

Oh, yes, how did Tom define that word? "A place where de cowboys ride."

The above article appeared in "Current Health."

Collaborative Reading -- What Did You Pay Attention To?

Finish making your notes about what you saw the speaker thinking as she read. Then check it out with the following list we've prepared to summarize the strategies we noticed the speaker using:

- Making predictions about what the writer is going to say. Several times the speaker 'guesses' about what might be coming next and then checks them out.

- Carrying on an active internal dialogue -- "talking to oneself" as you're reading.

- Asking questions. This is probably the most common mental activity we see in this example of focused reading. Throughout the article the speaker wonders, puts her thoughts into questions, and challenges herself to find the answers.

- Checking the obvious clues: title, subtitles. She spent time thinking about the meaning of the title before reading the article. Then she "browsed" through the subtitles. Did you notice that a list of the subtitles makes a good outline of the article's main points?

- Looking for the important ideas. The speaker frequently asks herself "What's important here?"

- Taking time to notice words and phrases that make the meaning clear. For example, she comments on "jest," "internal jogging," "exercise," "mirth" and others.

- Being alert to lists and numbers. These often indicate key points the author is making.

You may have taken notes on other things as well. All of these are examples of strategies effective learners use when they're reading. We'll put them into a list now that you can use to refer to as you continue with this course and with other courses as well.

Strategies for Paying Attention in Reading

1. Read the title and subtitles first. Ask yourself what the author is telling you and what you can expect the material to be about. What do you want to learn from reading this article? Use titles to get your mind going, much like shifting a car from park to drive.

2. Use visual clues, such as headings, graphics, pictures, or boldfaced type to keep yourself curious. These parts of an article or text give you small chunks of information that can keep you asking "I wonder what this is all about."

3. Ask yourself questions as you read. This is a very important part of being an active reader. It's as if you're carrying on a conversation with the author. It keeps you focused and attentive.

4. Look for key ideas. Stop after a paragraph or two and see if you can explain what was important about what you just read.

5. Check out the meaning of words as you read. You'll find that the author will probably give you clues, if you just take the time to notice.

6. Make notes as you go. You can do this in the margins of the article or on scratch paper.

7. Highlight or underline important ideas, facts, or details that you want to remember or find again.

8. Frame sentences or paragraphs that contain especially important information. Draw a line around them, as if you're framing a picture. You can go back to this easily then if you want to reread or find a fact or detail. Framing sets important ideas apart, gives them a special place on the page and in your mind.

Include these strategies in your Journal. We'll talk about many of these ideas again in the next lesson. And we'll do more work with collaborative reading.

Assignment

Practice what we've just talked about by selecting and reading an article in a current newspaper or from an on-line magazine like time.com or newsweek.com. Then write brief responses to the following points:

1. Give title of article, source, date, author, length

2. Write a 3 to 5 sentence summary of what the article was about.

3. List 3 to 4 strategies you used for paying attention and give examples. (e.g. "I asked myself questions" -- Here are a few questions I asked)

4. Is there a particular strategy that's worked well for you in the past? If so, what is it?

5. What other strategy that we've discussed in this lesson might you use more in the future?

Give or e-mail this assignment to your teacher.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Six:
"I know I really learned it!"

This lesson has four parts:

- Introduction
- Elaboration
- Analyzing the Reading
- A List of Elaboration Strategies

Introduction

"I can't remember what I just read!"

"I never remember the 'right' things -- what the teacher thinks I should know."

"I thought I knew it, but I guess I don't."

"This stuff has absolutely nothing to do with me!"

"I've studied an hour for this test. That's enough!"

Have you ever said any of these things? Or heard friends say them? Chances are probably pretty good that you've felt like this at times. You may have believed that you were the only one thinking or feeling this way. If you'd had the chance to talk with others in the same situation, you would very likely have learned that many of them were just as frustrated, confused, or discouraged as you.

Elaboration

These next two lessons focus on a broad learning strategy called **"elaboration"** and on the skills that make up that strategy. It's probably the most commonly used strategy in all kinds of learning efforts. We elaborate when we read, when we write, when we study for a test, when we try to remember something. The metaphor that comes to mind when trying to describe elaboration is bridge building.

Bridge builders start their work on solid ground, building out from shore to reach the other side. When we're trying to learn something new, we also have to start with something solid: what we already know. We build out from the familiar to the unfamiliar -- we connect new information to that which we already have. Bridge builders connect concrete and steel; we connect ideas and facts. How do we do this? By adding something of our own, by expanding upon the new, by comparing it to something we know. We call these activities "elaboration."

Why is elaboration so important to learning? The answer to this has to do with the way our mind works. Our brain is composed of millions of nerve cells that interact with each other in a system of intricate networks. Information is stored within these networks in what we call "memory."

Over a hundred years ago, William James, a noted philosopher and writer, said:

> **"The more other facts a fact is associated with in the mind, the better possession of it our memory retains. Each of its associates becomes a hook to which it hangs, a means to fish it up by when sunk beneath the surface. Together, they form a network of attachments by which it is woven into the entire tissue of our thought. The 'secret of a good memory' is thus the secret of forming diverse and multiple associations with every fact we care to retain."**

Recent research has added to James' thought. Studies have shown that it is not only the number of associations we form, but it is the "elaborative" thinking that we do that helps us to remember. This is the "adding to" principle that we just discussed. Another way of saying this is that it isn't just repeating something that helps us to learn it; more importantly, it is that we add something from our own thinking to make it our own and to put it into long term memory.

We'll be looking at a number of elaboration strategies in this and the next lesson. You'll find that these are not necessarily new to you; you may, in fact, use many of them already. These lessons describe and name common elaboration strategies and show you how they can be applied to unfamiliar material.

As an introduction in to this topic, let's take a few minutes to read parts of an article that appeared in *Life* magazine about a year and a half ago. We'll return to the collaborative reading format that we used in the previous lesson to show how an active reader uses elaboration strategies during reading. Then we'll talk about these processes and label the strategies.

As you read the following selection, keep a notepad and pencil or pen handy. Jot down notes about what you see the reader doing. The words in **blue** indicate the reader's thoughts.

Building a Better Brain

by Daniel Golden

"Evidence is accumulating that the brain works a lot like a muscle -- the harder you use it, the more it grows. Although scientists had long believed the brain's circuitry was hard-wired by adolescence and inflexible in adulthood, its newly discovered ability to change and adapt is apparently with us well into old age...

The party last year was a rowdy as it gets in a convent. Celebrating her 100th birthday, Sister Regina Mergens discarded her habit in favor of a daring red gown, downed two glasses of champagne and proclaimed her intention to live to 102. She didn't quite make it. Now, at vespers on a March afternoon in Mankato, Minnesota, dozens of nuns file past the open casket where Mergens, 101, lies, rosary beads in her hands.

Mankato? That's right here, about 70 miles southwest of the Twin Cities. I think I've driven past the convent once before, but I never knew anything much about who the nuns were or what they were doing.

> Concealed from view is an incision in the back of Mergen's head through which her brain has been removed. Mergens and nearly 700 elderly sisters in her order are the largest group of brain donors in the world. By examining these nuns, as well as thousands of stroke victims, amputees and people with brain injuries, researchers are living up to the promise of a presidential proclamation that the 1990's be the Decade of the Brain. Scientists are beginning to understand that the brain has a remarkable capacity to change and grow, even in old age, and that individuals have some control over how healthy and alert their brains remain as the years go by. The Sisters of Mankato, for example, lead an intellectually challenging life, and recent research suggests that stimulating the mind with mental exercise may cause brain cells, called neurons, to branch wildly. The branching causes millions of additional connections, or synapses, between brain cells. 'Think of it,' says Arnold Scheibel, director of UCLA's Brain Research Institute, 'as a computer with a bigger memory board. You can do more things more quickly.'

Think I'll pause for a minute here. There seems to be quite a lot of important information in this paragraph. I need to stop, look at some of it again, and make sure I'm understanding what's being said.

First, what do I think is the big idea here? Is there one sentence that conveys the main thought? I'll skim through the paragraph and see what I think.....Decade of the Brain?.....Brain has remarkable capacity to change.....Sisters lead an intellectually stimulating life....Branching of neurons causes millions of additional connections.

Well, I think the sentence that gives me the main idea is in the middle of the paragraph: "Scientists are beginning to understand that the brain has a remarkable capacity to change and grow, even in old age, and that individuals have some control over how healthy and alert their brains remain as the years go by." The two last sentences are important too, but they support this main idea by explaining how the brain works to build connections.

The brain really is like a huge computer. But I think there are some differences too. What, I wonder? I'll have to think about this some more. The branching the writer talks about reminds me also of a lot of electric wires strung together and when one activates the other it's like a little explosion. I can see it all popping and sizzling, going on in my head when I think. If I made a drawing of this, it would help me to understand how the neurons and synapses work.

> ....New knowledge about the brain may emerge from the obscure convent in Minnesota, a place where Ponce de Leon might have been tempted to test the waters.

Where have I heard that name "Ponce de Leon" before? Oh, I remember! From American History -- he's the Spanish explorer who was looking for the fountain of youth and he thought he found it in Florida someplace. So why does the writer say he might have been tempted to "test the waters" here in Mankato?

> Mankato is the site of the northwest headquarters of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, where a long life is normal. In part because the nuns of this order don't drink much, smoke or die in childbirth, they live to an average age of 85, and many live far beyond that. Of the 150 retired nuns residing in this real-life Cocoon, 25 are older than 90.

I see why now -- because the nuns have found an answer for a long life though mental exercise.

> But longevity is only part of the nuns' story. They also do not seem to suffer from dementia, Alzheimer's and other debilitating brain diseases as early or as severely as the general population. David Snowdon of the Sanders-Brown Center on Aging at the University of Kentucky, the professor of preventive medicine who has been studying the nuns for several years, has found that those who earn college degrees, who teach, who constantly challenge their minds, live longer than less-educated nuns who clean rooms or work in the kitchen. He suspects the difference lies in how they use their heads.

That's just like Grandpa. He's always reading about gardening and new varieties of plants. He says there's so

much to learn. He's about the most inquisitive person I know. He's got a million questions, about lots of things. I'll have to describe this article to him.

> Within the human brain each neuron contains at one end threadlike appendages, called axons, which send signals to other nearby neurons. At the other end of the neuron are similar threadlike appendages called dendrites, which receive messages from nearby cells.
>
> Axons and dendrites tend to shrink with age, but experiments with rats have shown that intellectual exertion can spur neurons to branch like the roots of a growing tree, creating networks of new connections. Once a skill becomes automatic, the extra connections may fade, but the brain is so plastic that they can be tapped again if needed.
>
> Like the power grid of an electric company, the branching and connections provide surplus capacity in a brownout. Snowdon and some neuroscientists believe that people with such a surplus who find their normal neural pathways blocked by the tangles that characterize Alzheimer's disease can reroute messages. To be sure, every brain is limited by genetic endowment, and flexibility does decrease with age. But new thinking in brain science suggests that whether someone hits that wall at age 65 or at age 102 may be partly up to the individual. Even Harvard's David Hubel, who shared a Nobel prize just 13 years ago for vision experiments showing that parts of the brain become fixed in infancy, is surprised that new research shows the brain 'is much more modifiable than we ever suspected.'

I feel as if I already know something about how the brain works. I took a biology course a couple years ago and there have been some TV programs about this subject too. But if I'm going to be able to explain this to my grandfather, I'll need to reread this last paragraph especially and then try to put it into my own words. So I'll give it a try here: Brain cells are called neurons and these neurons have long threads or axons attached to them at one end. They send signals to other cells in the brain through these axons. On the other side of the nerve cell are other threads, called dendrites. They receive the messages. So it's like the nerve cell generates the message, the axon sends it, and the dendrite of another cell gets it. Sort of like sending and receiving e-mail! And the more a person uses her brain, the more connections get created. Like a tree, growing more and more roots to take in water and become stronger. It makes sense to me now.

> .....Brain exercising is a way of life at the nunnery, where the sisters live by the principle that an idle mind is the devil's plaything. They write spiritual meditations in their journals and letters to their congressmen about the blockade of Haiti, and do puzzles of of all sorts. Although more than a few were born when Grover Cleveland was President, they are adept at debating Bill Clinton's health-reform proposals. Current events seminars are held every week. Raised before radio, the nuns are more skilled at answering questions on the TV program Jeopardy than the actual contestants. One 99-year old, Sister Mary Esther Boor, takes advantage of slow minutes while working as the complex's receptionist to solve brainteasers -- some with words in Spanish.
>
> .....Five nuns in Mankato will turn 100 within a few months. One, Sister Matthia Gores, will hit 101. Like many of the sisters, she taught school into her seventies, and she is still sharp enough to recite her rosary and knit gloves for poor children at the same time, with missing a stitch. 'I pray for a happy death,' she says. 'That's the most important thing in life -- to die well.' But she is in no hurry for that prayer to be answered. Having overcome cancer and a recent nasty bout with the flu, she looks forward to daily exercise sessions. Born two years after Dr. James Naismith invented basketball, she likes the geriatric version of the sport: shooting a Nerf ball through a hoop. Leaning on her walker one afternoon, she swishes three in a row."
>
> ***The excerpts above appeared in* Life *magazine.***

Analyzing The Reading

What can we draw from this reading exercise that helps us to understand more about "elaboration strategies?" We'll try to answer this important question by analyzing what we just read. Analyzing is another very critical thinking skill. When we analyze something we break it into smaller units or parts in order to understand the whole better. It's what the chemist does when he or she is trying to discover what elements compose a particular solution. In mental analysis we take apart a problem or issue and under the microscope in our minds we look carefully at separate ideas or concepts. Sometimes people call this mental activity "unpacking" -- sorting out, picking apart -- just the way we "unpack" a suitcase full of clothes. Analyzing helps us to understand more fully, to really know.

In our analysis here, we'll look at the italicized portions of the reading to "unpack" and name the strategies that were demonstrated. We'll start at the beginning of the article with the first comment and then continue on to the conclusion. If you took notes as you were reading, compare what you wrote to what follows here.

1.

> **Mankato? That's right here, about 70 miles southwest of the Twin Cities. I think I've driven past the convent once before, but I never knew much about who the nuns were or what they were doing.**

The reader is remembering what she already knows about the setting for the article, Mankato, Minnesota. She is forming a picture in her mind of the town and the convent. This helps her to connect with the story and to feel more a part of it. When we are able to make this link from our own experience to the written word, we increase our learning power.

- This strategy is called **"Relating what you know to new material."**

2.

> **Think I'll pause for a minute here. There seems to be quite a lot of important information in this paragraph. I need to stop, look at some of it again, and make sure I'm understanding what's being said.**
>
> **First, what do I think is the big idea here? Is there one sentence that conveys the main thought? I'll skim through the paragraph and see what I think...Decade of the Brain?...Brain has remarkable capacity to change....Sisters lead an intellectually stimulating life....Branching of neurons causes millions of additional connections.**

Do you hear the self-talk that's going on here? The reader is telling herself that she needs to slow down to consider the ideas she's just read. She's also asking herself what she should be paying attention to. Asking questions is probably the most basic approach we take toward learning. We'll talk more about this later.

- Two strategies we see here are **"Dialoguing" or "Self-talk" and "Asking Questions."**

3.

> **Well, I think the sentence that gives me the main idea is in the middle of the paragraph: "Scientists are beginning to understand that the brain has a remarkable capacity to change and grow, even in old age, and that individuals have some control over how healthy and alert their brains remain as the years go by." The two last sentences are important too, but they support this main idea by explaining how the brain works to build connections. I'm going to try putting the main idea into my own words so that I can remember it better. Here goes: Scientists think our brains change and grow all our lives. We can even have something to do with how well our brains work. I think that's what the writer is saying.**

Now we have identified the main thought of the paragraph. Since we've already read the whole article at this point, we could ask ourselves if this is the main idea of the whole piece. What do you think? The reader did something else too; she put the writer's words into her own. In trying to understand the important idea expressed

in this paragraph, the reader changed the writer's words into words of her own. Doing this forces us to clarify our understanding.

- This strategy is called **"Paraphrasing."**

4.

> **The brain really is like a huge computer. But I think there are some differences too. What, I wonder? I'll have to think about this some more. The branching the writer talks about reminds me also of a lot of electric wires strung together and when one activates the other it's like a little explosion. I can see it all popping and sizzling inside in my head when I think. If I made a drawing of this, it would help me to understand how the neurons and synapses work.**

There are several things to notice here. The reader is questioning again. Then she says that the branching of neurons reminds her of something else. She imagines what this looks like to her. And she thinks about making a drawing.

- Three strategies shown here are:
Comparing and Contrasting
Visualizing
Changing text to a different form

5.

> **Where have I heard that name "Ponce de Leon" before? Oh, I remember! From an American History class -- he's the Spanish explorer who was looking for the fountain of youth and he thought he found it in Florida someplace. So why does the writer say he might have been tempted to "test the waters" here in Mankato?**

Again, the reader is dialoguing with herself, asking questions and getting in touch with what she already knows.

6.

> **So, if I compare this to people I know, I think about my grandfather who's always reading books and magazine articles about horticulture. He's an avid gardener and he says there's so much to learn about plants and about research on growing new varieties. He's about the most inquisitive person I know. He's got a million questions, about lots of things. I'll have to describe this article to him.**

Here we see the reader using the "comparison/contrast" strategy, noticing the similarities between the nun's active mental states and her grandfather's. Doing this helps to make the written material more real and more meaningful to the reader, which, in turn, leads to greater recall. The writer's words have caused the reader to remember something from her own experience. This is part of the process of creating elaborative associations or mental "hooks" that we talked about earlier.

The reader adds a new strategy also when she talks about telling her grandfather about what she is reading. Telling someone else is a very effective way of learning something yourself. Remember the saying: If you really want to learn something, teach it to somebody.

- This strategy is called **"Teaching what you're learning to another person."**

7.

> **I feel as if I already know something about how the brain works. I took a biology course a couple of years ago and there have been some TV programs about this subject too. But if I'm going to be able to**

explain this to my grandfather, I'll need to reread this last paragraph especially and then try to put it into my own words.

She goes on then to **"paraphrase."** When you try to do this with something you're learning, do you notice how difficult it can be? You can't put new ideas into your own words unless you understand what the writer is saying. You may have to go back and reread the section several times; you may have to look up some unfamiliar words in the dictionary; or, you may need to ask someone else to clarify the meaning for you.

Once you've understood the writer's idea, then you can use the useful strategy of "paraphrasing."

8.

Now that I've finished the article, I'm going to try to recap what I've just read: Scientists are finding out that the more we use our minds, the better we'll be able to understand and learn new things. The brain is like a muscle -- the more we exercise it the stronger it will be. Our brain is made up of millions of nerve cells. When these nerve cells are stimulated, they send messages to other nerve cells through thread-like attachments called axons. The axons are the senders and dendrites (on the other end of the neuron) are the receivers. In this way, our brain makes countless connections and forms networks on which to store information. The nuns in Mankato are being studied to see how mental exercises and other learning experiences help them to remain alert and intellectually alive.

Here the reader has captured and put into her own words the central ideas of the entire passage. She's caught the "gist" of the article.

This strategy is called **"Summarizing."**

A List of Common Elaboration Strategies

Here are the strategies we've been studying:

1. Relating what you already know to what you are learning
2. Dialoguing or Self-talk
3. Asking yourself questions
4. Paraphrasing
5. Comparing and Contrasting
6. Visualizing
7. Changing text into another form
8. Teaching someone else
9. Summarizing

If you're not clear on what each of these strategies is or how to use it, you can either go back and reread parts of the preceding material or ask your teacher for more explanation. Don't skip over this if you have questions.

Assignment

This assignment asks you to do five things:

1. read an excerpt from Mark Twain's biographical book *Life on the Mississippi*

2. take notes as you read

3. name the elaboration strategies you used as you read

4. respond to questions about Twain's efforts to learn, and

5. write a summary of what you learned from doing this.

Mark Twain is a consummate storyteller; he weaves unforgettable characters, rich dialogue, and descriptive language together so masterfully that as readers we are transported to another place and time effortlessly. In *Life on the Mississippi*, Mark Twain tells about his own days as a boat pilot on the Mississippi. In the excerpt that you will read here, he recounts his experiences in "learning the river" under the tutelage of Mr. Bixby, his ever-demanding and, generally, patient teacher.

You will probably find the language a little off-putting at first, because he wrote this nearly one hundred years ago. Some vocabulary and usage may be strange to you. But let the story pull you forward. Read, enjoy, and follow the directions below.

1. First, if you have a printer, print out the list of elaboration strategies identified in this lesson. And print out the excerpt from the *Life on the Mississippi*.

2. Next, get ready to settle down for a good read. As you read, describe what is going on in your mind. Write your thoughts in the margins of the article. Keep the list of elaboration strategies beside you as you read and make an effort to try each strategy at least once. You'll probably use some of them several times.

3. When you have finished reading the article and writing your thoughts, go back and analyze the thoughts you've written down. Decide which of the elaboration strategies you were using and write the name of that strategy in the margin near the thought it represents.

4. Write a one paragraph response to these two questions: What changes in Twain's attitudes about learning did you notice? Give two or three examples as evidence for your answer. What seemed to motivate him to persist in his struggle to learn the river?

5. Write a paragraph summarizing what you've learned about learning from this lesson. Some of the questions you should answer in your paragraph are:

   - Which of the elaboration strategies do you use most often when you read?
   - Which of the strategies was the least natural for you to use?
   - What was the most interesting or important idea you learned from this lesson? Why was it important to you?

6. Either give everything back to your teacher or **mail it via postal mail**. If you mail it send an e-mail letting your teacher know that you've mailed your packet.

Learning Strategies

Lesson Seven: Knowing and Remembering

This lesson has five parts:

- Introduction
- What Do These Strategies Have to Do With Memory?
- Active Learning
- Choosing What Works for You
- Review in a Nutshell

Introduction

Elaboration strategies, we learned in the last lesson, boost our learning by helping us to understand in a deeper, more meaningful way. Using these strategies, we metaphorically spin a web of ideas that connects new thoughts to those already stored in our memory, and strengthens neural networks for knowing and remembering. In this lesson, we'll focus on the question: "How can I use elaboration strategies to help me remember what I've learned?" In exploring this question, we'll look briefly at issues of memory, active learning, and individual choice. You will also practice applying the strategies in an assignment that asks you to demonstrate what you know about elaborative thinking.

What Do These Strategies Have To Do With Memory?

As you've probably guessed by now, elaborating helps us not only to understand information but to recall it later. That's why paraphrasing, summarizing, and comparing -- as well as all the other strategies we studied -- are such helpful ones to use when you know you'll need to use the information at a later time. Some examples of this are when you are studying for a test, preparing to show someone how to do something, or teaching someone else about a subject.

Most researchers think of memory in two categories: primary and secondary, or short term and long term memory. When we are introduced to new people at a party, for example, we probably won't remember many of their names the following day. That's because our minds dropped the names into our short term memory and we didn't do anything to move them into more permanent, long term, memory storage. If you skim the morning paper to get an idea of what's going on in the world or in your community, the information is probably processed and stored in short term memory. A week from now you won't be able to recall much, if anything, about what you read.

Now let's imagine that you have a new baby and you're reading a book about infant care because you want very much to be a good parent. You have one important factor going for you -- the intent to learn. You're really interested. You have an immediate use for the information. And if you add another element to the mix here -- of applying some of the strategies we're studying now -- you'll be helping your brain to process information so that it can become part of long term memory.

When you use one or more of the elaboration strategies we're studying, you are helping your brain to "encode" information so that you'll be able to "retrieve" it at a later time. You are "converting" new ideas and data into forms that help your mind to understand and remember. Sometimes people compare mental processing to computer processing. Computers also take in new information; they "encode" language into a binary code using the numbers 0 and 1; they store this coded information; and you can retrieve it from computer memory through a system of file names.

As learners, we use elaboration and other strategies to encode, or change, information so that it means something to us personally and thus can be remembered.

Active Learning

Everything we've said so far about how to be a really successful learner puts you in control of the entire process. You are in the driver's seat when it comes to learning. You determine the direction you're going, how fast you're going to get there, and what you'll see along the way. This is a lot different from being a passenger who just sits and watches. Active learners are drivers; passive learners are passengers. Let's take a minute to recap some of the active learning strategies we've explored:

- The first article we read about the Mankato nuns made the point that exercise is good for the mind. Using the brain, in other words -- challenging yourself to learn new things in new ways. While it might be easier to sit back and be a passive watcher of television or movies or sports, you won't be giving the nerve cells in your brain the kind or degree of stimulation they most need for creative learning.

- We talked about having the will to learn, about feeling inside yourself that something is important to you, important enough to put forth a persistant effort. Often learning about something requires our efforts over a period of time.

- Paying attention forces us to be active learners. We focus our minds so that we can attend to what is important at the moment. Have you ever noticed that when you're really paying attention to something everything else fades from view? All your energy is directed toward whatever it is you're doing and you are, in a sense, "lost" to the rest of the world.

- Connecting what we are learning to what we already know -- elaboration -- demands active, creative thinking from us. There is no recipe here that fits for everyone. Our own individual backgrounds and experiences are what we need to work with to shape new information into patterns our individual minds can store in memory. This leads us into the third main idea we described in the opening paragraph of this lesson: individual choice.

Choosing What Works for You

Some strategies will be more attractive to you than others; they'll feel more natural, seem more interesting, and generally work out better for you. Some strategies will work well for you in certain learning situations and not so well in others. Certain combinations of individual strategies will suit various purposes you have for learning. Give yourself some time to practice different strategies and to use them in different situations. Try them out. Experiment. Discover what's comfortable and what works best for you.

Using Elaboration Strategies Effectively -- Review in a Nutshell

If you think you understand these techniques now, then you might want to skip the next few paragraphs and go right on to the assignment. If you want a little more amplification, then spend the next few minutes considering the following guidelines. You can also come back to this review summary as you're working on the next assignment:

1. Asking Questions

Asking questions is the key that activates all the other strategies. If you generate and answer questions about the material as you're studying, you'll end up using most of the other learning strategies. The following examples show what we mean by asking questions about the material:

1. What does this remind me of?
2. How could I use this information in the project I'm working on?
3. How could I put this in my own words?
4. What would be a good example of this?
5. How could I teach this to my dad? to a friend?
6. Where else have I heard something like this?
7. What is the main idea of his story?
8. Have I ever been in a situation where I felt like the main character?
9. If I were going to interview the author, what would I ask her?
10. If this idea were not true, what would that mean? How would that change things?
11. How could I represent this in a diagram?
12. How do I feel about the author's opinion?
13. If I had lived during this period, how would I feel about my life?

Practice generating and using these types of questions for different learning assignments and situations. With practice, you'll see many easy ways to use elaboration. Useful questions will help get you started, keep you going, take you in new directions and give you ideas about what you are learning. Asking questions about the material you're studying is the very heart and soul of learning.

Questions force us to think. They suggest ways of solving problems. They help us look at things with a critical

I would probably teach others Ayurvedic Massage Therapy. Ayurvedic massage is based on an old form of healing knowledge called Ayurvedic Medicine. It is over 5,000 years old, it originated in India. It is a detox massage focusing on the individual. In Ayurvedic Medicine there are three different body types, Vata, Pitta an Kapha.

I would find it easier for both parties to be in the same room and have a model to work with. I would start out with the knowledge of why you do it, what it does (benefits of it) and where it originated. Then I feel they would start to realize the healing benefits of it and want to know how to do it because they would want to help other people feel better.

I would then start working on the model, and let the other person observe the first couple of times. Then I would have them try it as I observe. I would correct them in their mistakes and encourage them in all. After a couple of times watching them do it on a model I would give them the ultimate test and let them give me a massage:).

3. When you've finished writing down the important ideas about your subject and the steps involved in performing your skill, give or e-mail these paragraphs to your teacher.

4. Next, identify your student. Pick a friend or a family member who has a genuine interest in the subject you've chosen (or who owes you a favor). Ask your student to question you about anything that doesn't make sense to them.

At the end of your teaching session, write a brief summary of your experience. Describe who you taught and how long it took. What questions did your student ask as you were teaching? What was the most difficult part for your student to understand? How did you get around your student's confusion? Did you learn anything new about the teaching process as you were working with your student? Send or give your summary to your teacher.

Assignment -- Learning Journal

There are three parts to this assignment.

- First, write a paragraph in which you describe an experience you had once in trying to learn something that was difficult for you. How did you go about the task or assignment? (Maybe this was a test you were studying for or maybe you had a paper to write and needed to do some reading in preparation.) How did you fare? What did you do? Were you successful? If you'd known then what you know now about elaboration strategies, what might you have done differently?

- Second, list and briefly define three elaboration strategies that you like to use most.

- Third, list three things that you've learned about learning from these two lessons on elaboration.

Send or give your assignment to your teacher.

eye. They push us to think critically, to analyze.

So, ask questions continuously as you read, as you observe or watch, as you listen. Make it a habit. Many of us learned about the "5 W's + H" in grade school or junior high school : Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? Through asking these kinds of questions, we find ways to elaborate upon what we are learning.

2. Talking About the Material with Yourself

Asking questions leads to the next strategy: dialoguing or talking with yourself. You can do this silently or you can do it out loud. Many people find that actually paraphrasing or summarizing out loud helps them greatly in learning material that may be difficult or very unfamiliar.

3. Comparing and Contrasting

In what ways is this material you're studying like something you know about? What does it remind you of? How is it different? This, of course, is the strategy of comparing and contrasting. You can create analogies that enlarge your understanding as we did earlier in the example of "little explosions" in our minds as messages travel through nerve cells.

4. Visualizing

Creating a picture in your mind about the idea or subject you're studying, visualizing, works well for people who are visual learners. They can "see" something in their mind. If you're reading about something that is hard for you to grasp, try closing your eyes and using your imagination to "paint" a mental picture. You may find that this is a great help in recalling ideas, words, and descriptions.

5. Transforming

How could I represent this in a diagram? A chart? Could I draw a picture of it? Could I take this idea and write a poem about it? This is what we call "transforming" -- putting it into a different shape. Can you see how this is closely related to paraphrasing? To visualizing? It's just another way of adding to the new information to make it your own.

6. Explaining the Material in Your Own Words

The other elaboration strategies we've discussed: paraphrasing, summarizing, teaching someone else probably need no further explanation. If you can put something into your own words, if you can distill the important ideas -- the "gist" -- and if you can help someone else to learn it, then you will indeed know it.

Assignment

One of the best ways to test your own knowledge of something is to try to teach it to someone else. Teaching someone else can also be a helpful learning strategy for the teacher because the questions that others ask as we try to teach them force us to become clearer and more knowledgeable ourselves. In this assignment you will become the teacher and report back on the results of your teaching experience.

During this next week, complete these steps:

1. Imagine that you are designinated by a supervisor, instructor or coach to teach or train someone new to do a part of your job or to understand a concept, procedure or movement that you excell in. What will you be asked to teach? How will you approach the teaching task so it is both useful and engaging for the newcomer?

2. Next, write down the important ideas about your subject and the steps involved in the teaching process. For example, this is how another student, who is also a massage therapist, outlined her teaching goals and plan:

Learning Strategies

Lesson Eight: Organizing Strategies

This lesson has five parts:

- Introduction
- How This Section of the Course is Organized
- Organizing Strategies for Readers: Visual Cues
- Organizing Strategies for Readers: Discovering Patterns
- A Final Word

Introduction

- Imagine that you are having company for the weekend. Because you will be cooking several meals for them, you need to go grocery shopping. You don't have a lot of time to spend in the store and it's very important that you not forget anything. What might you do? Make a grocery list? How could you make that list as fool-proof as possible so you get everything you need?

- You are put in charge of making all the arrangements for a week-long camping trip for yourself and twenty other students. These students are involved in a science project, analyzing the effects of environmental change on birds. You need to choose a state park, decide what equipment is needed and where to get it, order food, determine the camping gear people should bring, and make arrangements for transportation. Where do you start your planning? How do you know what to do first?

- You pick up a part-time job at a large store at the Mall of America. One of the first things they ask you to do is to take an inventory of merchandise in their housewares department. You walk into the store room and your spirits sink as you realize that there's no rhyme or reason to the way the merchandise is stored. Everything is jumbled up. Dishes, towels, silverware, breadboards -- all are mixed together and scattered over many shelves. How will you do the inventory?

In the first example, you would probably make a list. If you were really efficient, you might group the items you need to buy according to where they're located in the store. Of course, you'd need to be pretty familiar with the store's layout to do this. Or you might group them by type, such as fresh produce, canned goods, meats, breads, paper products.

The second example is a much more complicated task. You'd probably want to set some priorities and decide the order that things need to be attended to. Deciding on the site might be a first job because that could affect the equipment and clothing you need. Arranging for transportation might follow. If you don't know where you're going and how you're going to get there, you won't be able to make good arrangements for everything else.

The inventory-taking job in the third example sounds like a major headache because the storeroom is in a chaotic state. If you're going to count similar items, you might want to arrange them so that all the everyday dishes are together, the silverware sets are together, and so on.

All the examples involve developing a system for accomplishing a task, figuring out a strategy for grouping ideas or objects that have something in common together, and deciding what to do first. In plain words -- organizing. As with other learning strategies we've discussed in this course, we use organizing techniques pretty much intuitively a lot of the time. A good thing too. If we had to stop and think about how to organize everything we do, we might never get anything done. When it comes to learning something, however, knowing and using organizing strategies is essential.

How This Lesson is Organized

We'll look at organization from the perspective of the reader. Getting a grasp of how an article or story is organized when you're reading is a lot like doing detective work -- you have to figure out the author's organizational plan from the clues you find. Sometimes these clues are right there on the page. Sometimes they're not as visible and require you to dig a little deeper.

In this lesson, you'll learn more about both visual clues and internal organizing structures writers use in different kinds of material. Knowing about these organizing strategies helps you to see the big picture and to penetrate the mystery of the printed page.

Organizing Strategies for Readers: Using Visual Clues

You have already had a good deal of experience in working with different formats in written materials. You've noticed various techniques writers and editors use to call attention to key ideas. Here we list some that you've probably come across many times:

1. **Titles** -- Main title, subtitles and sub-sub titles

2. **Typeface** -- boldface and italic types are most used

3. **Graphics** -- photographs, pictures, charts, diagrams

4. **Sidebars** -- writing at the margins, usually a sentence or two

5. **Sections** -- introduction, body (often with subtitles), summary

6. **Tables of content** -- lists topics

7. **Indexes** -- reference for ideas, terms

What's the purpose of these devices? Most often it's to get our attention. The writer is inviting us to pay attention to these clues so that we will understand what's important in the article or chapter. In a sense, they are the "bones" of the writing, meant to be previewed before reading, carefully attended to as we read, and reviewed when we finish.

Visual clues do more than point out key ideas or concepts. They also let us know something about how the writer has ordered, or sequenced, these ideas. Is the article written in chronological -- or time -- order? If you're reading about how to do something, for example, you'll usually find the writer has arranged ideas in an order that shows what you should do first, second, and so on. Sometimes writers will number these points for you; sometimes they use bullets or other devices to keep your eye moving down the page in the order they intended.

You'll find writers use a different way of ordering ideas in newspaper articles. They start off with a lead paragraph that packs in the most important information right at the beginning. Why do they do this? Why not keep the reader in suspense? Journalists know that we want to get information from a newspaper as quickly as possible. If they waited until the end to tell us the most important news we might never read it.

Catalogs organize information in yet another way: by category or subject. Tables of content and indexes in catalogs are easy-to-see clues telling us where to look.

Visual clues also often point out the topics the writer will be addressing. Titles and subtitles, for example, can give us an outline of an article and can provide a good idea of what the article is all about.

Assignment

First, we'd like you to open up the **A.B.E. Online** web site to check the kinds of visual clues povided there. Skim the text and then write your responses to the following requests:

> List and briefly describe three different types of visual clues used in the home pages?
>
> How did the writer order her ideas? Like a newspaper article? By topic? In chronological order? By category? Give an example of the organization strategy.

Second, use the Internet or find an article in a magazine, skim it and then respond to the items below:

> Give the article's title, the author, magazine and date of publication
>
> Describe several visual clues the writer used
>
> How effective you think these clues are in pointing out the article's organization?
>
> How did the writer order the ideas? Like a newspaper article? By topic? In chronological order? By category? Give an example of the organization strategy.

Send or give both assignments to your teacher.

Organizing Strategies for Readers: Discovering Patterns

So far we've looked at some visual clues writers use to let us know what they want us to pay attention to. These are also other signals they provide to indicate the direction of their ideas and to keep us moving along with the flow of their ideas. In this lesson we'll take a deeper look "inside" the writing itself to discover the internal structure the writer has used.

We'll read four different types of essays, each demonstrating a particular organizational pattern. With each reading, we'll ask you to do a couple things: One, to analyze the writing and two, to "chunk" important ideas. In doing this, you'll strengthen your ability to detect the inner structure of written materials and to pull together common ideas. Both skills are essential to you in your development as a learner, a reader, and a writer.

Writers use different methods to organize their material based on their purpose. For example, if an author wants to tell us a story about how her grandmother came to this country from Sweden and lived in a sod house on the South Dakota prairie, she will organize the elements of the story in a way that builds our interest and involvement. On the other hand, if a writer wants to convince, or persuade, us to believe that we should support the conservation of America's wetlands, he will arrange his arguments to convince us to support his point of view. If the writer of a car manual wants to tell us how to change a flat tire, he will sequence his ideas to help us understand the steps we need to follow.

In the next paragraphs, we describe some **common forms of writing** so you can become more familiar with underlying patterns of organization. Sometimes people call these forms rhetorical structures. Rhetoric has to do with the use of language. It asks questions about how we organize oral and written language into some useful patterns in order to get our ideas across to others. Knowing about these approaches is helpful both in reading a variety of materials and in writing.

- **Narration:** Telling a story, usually about personal experience. A good story has a point or a purpose: it can be long or short, oral or written. Narratives usually describe events in a time sequence (chronological order). The writer or storyteller chooses events that propel the story forward and fit the overall purpose for telling the story.

- **Description:** Capturing people, places and events in words so that readers can visualize them and respond to them. Descriptions paint a picture in words that help us as readers to share an experience. The writer chooses details that help convey a dominant impression and arranges these details so that a full image is presented.

- **Process Analysis:** Explaining an action or event step by step, from beginning to end. Examples include how to lose weight, how to train a dog, how to study for a test. This kind of writing tells us "how" and organizes details in a step by step fashion.

- **Comparison/Contrast:** Understanding one subject by putting it next to another. Comparing involves discovering similarities and contrast involves discovering differences. Both comparison and contrast are considered two parts of the same process because we usually want to know more about how one subject is both like and different from another.

- **Cause and Effect:** Exploring reasons and results. What will happen if I mix these two potent chemicals together? How will my body be affected if I go on a low-fat diet and exercise daily? What will happen to our environment if we continue to destroy the world's rain forests? Analyzing causes and effects helps us to clarify our perspectives and to make thoughtful decisions.

- **Persuasion:** Moving people to thought or action. To persuade is to convince someone to think, act, or feel a certain way. Persuasive writing is found in many forms, including newspaper editorials, magazine articles, books, advertisements, brochures and many other materials.

There are other writing, or rhetorical, forms that you may encounter, including example (illustrating ideas through concrete examples), definition (explaining an idea, concept, or object), and classification (organizing items with similar features into a group or groups).

Assignment

The article "Getting Lost" is written for people who hike or backpack along trails. The writer gives some great

advice about how not to get lost and about what to do if you do get lost.

We are using it in this lesson not because we're planning a camping trip, but because it provides a metaphor about not getting lost as we read. In other words, what the writer says here about the outdoors and orienteering has a lot of application to reading and writing.

Here's what you should do:

Read the first section under the subtitle: "How to Avoid Getting Lost." This is about 3 pages long. Read the rest of the article if you want to; the information may come in handy someday. But for this assignment, you only need to pay attention to the first section.

Then write a paragraph telling what you think this has to do with organization in reading and writing. For example, in the sixth paragraph of the article, the writer says: "Simply be alert to your surroundings, especially as you travel." How might you compare this to reading? Watching for visual clues so you know what to expect? Looking at the overall format to preview what the writer will be presenting? These are ways the writer develops the environment for her ideas, just as physical features in a landscape provide the environment for hikers.

Be creative. Use your imagination. Have some fun with this assignment. Try to make at least three or four comparisons of avoiding getting lost in the outdoors to getting lost in what you read.

Send or give your paragraph to your teacher.

Then go right on to the next assignment which asks you to do some reading and analyzing.

Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to become acquainted with four structures, or forms, writers commonly use to organize their writing. You'll be asked to identify the strategies the writer used and to recognize the underlying patterns in the selections.

These are the titles of the selections you will be reading:

> ***"The Saturday Evening Post"*** by Russell Baker (example of Narration)
>
> ***"Let's Get Vertical"*** by Beth Wald (example of Process Analysis)
>
> ***"Growing Up in the U.S.: A First Generation Look"*** by Elena Asturias (example of Comparison/Contrast)
>
> ***"The Broken Cord"*** by Michael Dorris (example of Cause and Effect)

Read each selection and then the questions that follow.

- **"The Saturday Evening Post"** -- Analyzing the Story's Organization

  1. How does Baker arrange the details in this story? Why do you think he organizes them this way?

  2. Why do you think he spends a good deal of time describing the interview with the executive from Curtis Publishing?

  3. What events does he follow the interview with?

  4. What rescues him from life as a salesman?

  5. What is the climatic moment of the story?

6. For your consideration: Think back over the events of the story and trace how the writer moved from the interview to the climax. Notice how the method of organization focused on the misery Baker experienced in trying to live up to his mother's expectations and the relief he felt when he found a profession that satisfied them both. A different arrangement would have given the story a very different outlook.

- **"Let's Get Vertical"** -- Analyzing the Essay's Organization

1. What are Wald's main topics? In what order?

2. Why do you think she presents her topics in this order? Does her arrangement work for you?

3. Why do you suppose she introduced her essay by telling about a terrifying personal experience?

4. For your consideration: In describing a process for becoming a mountain climber, Wald uses a sequence of steps that move from personal experience to acquiring the needed skills. Notice how she captures our interest right at the beginning by drawing us in to a vicarious climbing experience. Those opening paragraphs build our motivation to learn more about this sport. Notice also how she moves from one step to another in a sequence that makes sense to us as readers.

- **"Growing Up in the U.S."** -- Analyzing the Essay's Organization

1. What is Asturias comparing in this essay?

2. Define "assimilation."

2. What do you think is the point of her essay?

3. For your consideration: Asturias organizes her material around two main issues, the advantages and disadvantages of assimilation. First she presents the advantages and then she indicates a shift in thought by saying, "However, there are trade-offs..." She follows this with a description of the disadvantages of assimilation. Did you find this organizational strategy easy to follow? Review the essay once more to identify the details she uses in each category.

- **"The Broken Cord"** -- Analyzing the Essay's Organization

1. According to Dorris, what three things caused Adam to behave the way he did?

2. List the effects of alcohol on Adam.

3. For your consideration: Dorris has written a very poignant story about his adopted son in which he tells us about his hopes and dreams for Adam and contrasts these with the realities of Adam's life. Since this writing, Adam has died. He was struck by a car as he walked home from work. His obituary described him as "a brave, forgiving, and trusting person, gentle of heart and quick to laugh."

A Final Word

In this lesson, you've had opportunities to explore some organization patterns and strategies that writers use. We've tried to peel away the outer layers of a story or article in order to see clearly the way it was put together. To use a very ordinary example, it's as if we stripped off layers of wallpaper to discover the builder's original wall. Knowing this helps us to understand what we need to do now to make the remodeling project successful. In a similar way, knowing more about the writer's plan helps us understand what we as readers need to be attending to so that we can make the learning project successful.